

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

09/704,638

Examiner

Scott L. Jarrett

Applicant(s)

DOERR ET AL.

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 2/8/2007.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 38-55.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____


TARIQ R. HAFIZ
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600

ALLOWANCE

1. The following is an Allowance in response to Applicant's Amendment submitted on February 8, 2007. Claims 1-37 are canceled (Examiners Amendment below), Claims 38-41 (Applicant's Submission February 8, 2007) and Claims 42-55 (Examiners Amendment below) are new. Claims 42-55 are currently pending and allowed below.

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submissions filed on February 8, 2007 have been entered.

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

2. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interviews with Mr. Maurice Pirio (Reg. No. 33,273) on April 30, 2007 and May 1, 2007.

Amendments to the Claims:

Claims 1-37 Canceled.

42. (New) A computer-readable storage medium containing instructions for controlling a computing device to specify and display whether a project task duration of a project plan is estimated or definite in a project management system, by a method comprising:

determining whether the specifying of a project task duration is in a first mode or a second mode;

when in the first mode,

receiving from a user a first project task duration string via a first project task duration field, the first project task duration string including a project task duration value, a project task duration display type, and a project task estimated character, the project task duration value being a numerical value of time, the project task duration display type indicating units of the numerical value of time, and the project task estimated character indicating that the project task duration is

estimated and needs to be adjusted when a definite project task duration is known;

parsing the first project task duration string to identify the project task duration value, the project task duration display type, and the project task estimated character;

storing an indication of the project task duration value and the project task duration display type; and

setting an estimated flag to indicate that the project task duration is estimated;

when in the second mode,

receiving from the user a second project task duration string via a second task duration field and an indication of whether the project task duration is estimated via a estimated duration field, the second project task duration string including a project duration value and a project task duration display type;

parsing the second project task duration string to identify the project task duration value and the project task duration display type;

storing an indication of the project task duration value and the project task duration display type; and

setting an estimated flag to indicate whether the estimated duration field indicates whether the project task duration is estimated;

displaying the project task duration by displaying an indication of whether the duration is estimated based on the estimated flag and displaying a project task duration string that includes the project task duration value, the project task duration display type, and when the project task duration is estimated based on the estimated flag, a project task estimated character;

and

updating the project task duration that is estimated when a definite project task duration is known.

43. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 42 wherein tasks are hierarchically organized and wherein when a parent task has at least one child task whose duration is estimated, displaying an indication that the duration of the parent task is estimated.

44. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 42 including upon receiving an indication to display only tasks whose durations are estimated, displaying an indication of each such task.

45. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 42 wherein the project task estimated character is a symbol of uncertainty.

46. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 42 wherein the first mode is a sheet mode and the second mode is a dialog mode.

47. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 42 wherein when in the second mode, the string may optionally include the project task estimated character.

48. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 42 including allowing a user to specify filtering based on the estimated flag.

49. (New) A computing device for specifying and displaying whether a project task duration of a project plan is estimated or definite in a project management system, comprising:

- a component that determines whether the specifying of a project task duration is in a first mode or a second mode;

- a component that, when in the first mode,

- receives from a user a first project task duration string via a first project task duration field, the first project task duration string including a

project task duration value, a project task duration display type, and a project task estimated character, the project task duration value being a numerical value of time, the project task duration display type indicating units of the numerical value of time, and the project task estimated character indicating that the project task duration is estimated and needs to be adjusted when a definite project task duration is known;

parses the first project task duration string to identify the project task duration value, the project task duration display type, and the project task estimated character;

stores an indication of the project task duration value and the project task duration display type; and

sets an estimated flag to indicate that the project task duration is estimated;

a component that, when in the second mode,

receives from the user a second project task duration string via a second task duration field and an indication of whether the project task duration is estimated via a estimated duration field, the second project task duration string including a project duration value and a project task duration display type;

parses the second project task duration string to identify the project task duration value and the project task duration display type;

stores an indication of the project task duration value and the project task duration display type; and

sets an estimated flag to indicate whether the estimated duration field indicates whether the project task duration is estimated;

a component that displays the project task duration by displaying an indication of whether the duration is estimated based on the estimated flag and displaying a project task duration string that includes the project task duration value, the project task duration display type, and when the project

task duration is estimated based on the estimated flag, a project task estimated character; and

a component that updates the project task duration that is estimated when a definite project task duration is known.

50. (New) The computing device of claim 49 wherein tasks are hierarchically organized and wherein when a parent task has at least one child task whose duration is estimated, the component that displays the project task duration displays an indication that the duration of the parent task is estimated.

51. (New) The computing device of claim 49 including upon receiving an indication to display only tasks whose durations are estimated, a component that displays an indication of each such task.

52. (New) The computing device of claim 49 wherein the project task estimated character is a symbol of uncertainty.

53. (New) The computing device of claim 49 wherein the first mode is a sheet mode and the second mode is a dialog mode.

54. (New) The computing device of claim 49 wherein when in the second mode, the string may optionally include the project task estimated character.

55. (New) The computing device of claim 49 including a component that allows a user to specify filtering based on the estimated flag.

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

3. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance.

The present invention is directed to a project management system and method for receiving and displaying an estimated project task duration wherein the estimated project task duration is represented as a duration string including a project task duration value (numerical value of time), a project task duration display type (indicating units of the numerical value of time), and a project task estimated character that indicates that the project task duration is estimated and needs to be adjusted when a definite project task duration is known (e.g., "3wks?").

Additionally the project management system and method displays the numerical value of time with an estimated duration character if the estimated flag is detected and indicates that the numerical value of time is estimated and needs to be adjusted when a definite duration value is known (e.g. after a project task has been completed).

The closest prior art Microsoft Project 98 and Palasides @Risk software application fail to teach or suggest either singularly or in combination a project management system/method comprising:

- first *and* second modes (screens, dialog and sheet modes) wherein both modes receive from a user a project task duration string via a first project task duration field, the first project task duration string including a project task duration value, a project task duration display type, and a project task estimated character, the project

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task duration value being a numerical value of time, the project task duration display type indicating units of the numerical value of time, and the project task estimated character indicating that the project task duration is estimated and needs to be adjusted when a definite project task duration is known (Figures 7, 8);

- setting an estimated flag to indicate that the project task duration is estimated;
 - displaying the project task duration by displaying an indication of whether the duration is estimated based on the estimated flag and displaying a project task duration string that includes the project task duration value, the project task duration display type, and when the project task duration is estimated based on the estimated flag, a project task estimated character; and
 - updating the project task duration that is estimated when a definite project task duration is known
- as recited in independent Claims 38, 42 and 49.

Microsoft Project 98 (MS Project) teaches a project management system and method comprising:

- a user interface for receiving a project task duration value string having a duration value portion and an indication that the project task duration is estimated, wherein the duration value string is text in dialog and sheet modes (e.g. 2w; Hour 4 Turning the Task List into a Schedule – Estimating Task Duration, Pages 1, 3; “The actual date fields display "NA" until you take a step that sets an actual date. You can

remove the actual date by typing NA in an actual date field.”, Hour 17 - Tracking Work on the Project - Tracking Actual Performance, Page 2);

- a parser for separating the duration value string into the duration value wherein the duration value is converted into a number value of time, inherent in MS Project's ability to accept user input (entered duration) in the form of strings (e.g. 3d, 3 month; Hour 4 Turning the Task List into a Schedule – Estimating Task Duration, Pages 1, 3; Figure 4.2) that the system/method then parses (separates) in order to identify, store and display the individual project task duration parameters entered;

- a storage for storing the separated duration value string (Hour 4 Turning the Task List into a Schedule – Estimating Task Duration, Pages 1, 3);

- a display for showing the duration value string in an estimated project task duration field wherein the estimated project task duration is adjusted when a definite duration value is known (actual, edit project task; Figures 1.15, 14.10).

While the project task duration string (e.g. 2w) is entered as an estimated project duration by default, actual project task durations being entered in a separate field, MS Project does not expressly teach receiving, via a first and second mode, and displaying an estimated project task duration wherein the estimated project task duration is represented as a duration string including a project task duration value, a project task duration display type, and a project task estimated character, the project task duration value being a numerical value of time, the project task duration display type indicating units of the numerical value of time, and the project task estimated character indicating

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that the project task duration is estimated and needs to be adjusted when a definite project task duration is known as claimed in independent claims 38, 42, and 49.

@Risk teaches that the project/task duration value/string comprises an estimated duration and estimated duration display type (e.g. display/model a normal distribution representing the uncertainty/risk associated with the estimated duration; reference R3: Page 2; Last Three Paragraphs, Page 4; "Construction[Duration] = RiskNormal(Design[Duration],5)", Paragraph 4, Page 6; wherein "RiskNormal" indicates not only that the duration is estimated but also the type of estimate/approximation distribution to be modeled and displayed; reference R3: Page 2) in an analogous art of project management for the purposes of enabling users to replace uncertain project/task duration values with a uncertain/estimated duration functions thereby enabling users to represent a range of estimated durations and model the impact those estimated durations have on the overall project's schedule (reference R3: Paragraphs 1-2, Page 1; Figures 1, 3, 5).

@Risk teaches a project planning system and method for specifying durations comprising (reference R3: Page 1, Paragraph 1; Figures 1, 3, 5):

- receiving from a user a duration of a project task and an indication that the duration is estimated (uncertain, risky, variable, planned, forecasted, predicted, tentative, possible, etc.; reference R1: Paragraph 5, Page 1; reference R2: Paragraphs 3-4, Page 1; Paragraphs 4-5, 8, Page 2; Paragraphs 5-6, Page 3; reference R3:

Paragraph 8, Page 2; Last Three Paragraphs, Page 4;

"Construction[Duration]=RiskNormal(Design[Duration],5)", Paragraph 4, Page 6);

- storing an indication of the duration of the project tasks is estimated (reference R3: Paragraph 1, Page 1; Risk Toolbar, Save, Figure 1);

- displaying an indication that the duration is estimated (probability of duration, range of task/project durations – inherently indicating the uncertain/estimated nature of the task/project duration; reference R3: Figures 1, 3, 5);

- utilizing flags (if/then conditions) to determine estimated project tasks durations (reference R1: Paragraph 4, Page 1); and

- integrates with Microsoft Project 98 (reference R1: Paragraph 1, Page 1; reference R2: Paragraphs 2-3, Page 1).

While @Risk teaches receiving from a user a duration string, @Risk does not expressly teach receiving, via a first and second mode, and displaying an estimated project task duration wherein the estimated project task duration is represented as a duration string including a project task duration value, a project task duration display type, and a project task estimated character, the project task duration value being a numerical value of time, the project task duration display type indicating units of the numerical value of time, and the project task estimated character indicating that the project task duration is estimated and needs to be adjusted when a definite project task duration is known; setting an estimated flag to indicate that the project task duration is estimated; and displaying the project task duration by displaying an indication of

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whether the duration is estimated based on the estimated flag and displaying a project task duration string that includes the project task duration value, the project task duration display type, and when the project task duration is estimated based on the estimated flag, a project task estimated character as claimed in independent claims 38, 42, and 49.

None of the prior art of record, taken individually or in any combination, teach, inter alia, a computer implemented method, computer-readable storage medium containing instructions for controlling a computing device, and computing device, to specify and display whether a project task duration of a project plan is estimated or definite in a project management system comprising a first and second mode wherein a user inputs a project task duration string via a first project task duration field, the first project task duration string including a project task duration value, a project task duration display type, and a project task estimated character, the project task duration value being a numerical value of time, the project task duration display type indicating units of the numerical value of time, and the project task estimated character indicating that the project task duration is estimated and needs to be adjusted when a definite project task duration is known; setting an estimated flag to indicate that the project task duration is estimated; and displaying the project task duration by displaying an indication of whether the duration is estimated based on the estimated flag and displaying a project task duration string that includes the project task duration value, the

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project task duration display type, and when the project task duration is estimated based on the estimated flag, a project task estimated character .

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Fujitsu, Ltd., JP04223851, teaches a project management system and method comprising a project duration string.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Scott L. Jarrett whose telephone number is (571) 272-7033. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 8:00AM - 5:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Hafiz Tariq can be reached on (571) 272-6729. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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Asst. Examiner
May 2, 2005



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